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[TITLE OF THE INVENTION]

LEAD FRAME AND BGA TYPE RESIN ENCAPSULATED SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE

[CLAIMS]

1. A lead frame for a BGA type semiconductor device shaped to have a thickness smaller than that of a lead frame blank at tips of inner leads thereof in accordance with a two-step etching process, comprising:

the inner leads;

outer terminal portions each integrally connected to an associated one of the inner leads, the outer terminal portions being adapted to be electrically connected to an external circuit and arranged in a two-dimensional fashion on a surface of the lead frame blank where the inner leads are formed;

the tips of the inner leads each having a polygonal cross-sectional shape including four faces respectively provided with a first surface, a second surface, a third surface, and a fourth surface, the first surface being opposite to the second surface and flush with one surface of the remaining portion of the inner lead having the same thickness as that of the lead frame blank, and the third

and fourth surfaces each having a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead; and

the outer terminal portions each having a polygonal cross-sectional shape including four faces respectively provided with a pair of opposite surfaces being flush with respective surfaces of the lead frame blank and another pair of opposite surfaces having a convex shape protruded toward the outside of the outer terminal portion.

2. The lead frame according to claim 1, wherein each of the inner leads is shaped to have a thickness smaller than that of the lead frame blank at the entire portion thereof.

3. A BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device fabricated using a lead frame according to claim 1 or 2, comprising:

terminal portions made of solder and arranged on a surface of the lead frame where the outer terminal portions are formed, the terminal portions serving to be connected to an external circuit;

a semiconductor chip fixedly attached, at a surface thereof formed with electrode portions, to the first surfaces of the inner leads by an insulating adhesive interposed therebetween in such a fashion that the

electrode portions are received between facing ones of the inner leads;

the electrode portions each being electrically connected to the second surface of an associated one of the inner leads by a wire.

4. A BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device fabricated using a lead frame according to claim 1 or 2, comprising:

terminal portions made of solder and arranged on a surface of the lead frame where the outer terminal portions are formed, the terminal portions serving to be connected to an external circuit; and

a semiconductor chip electrically connected to the second surfaces of the inner leads by bumps, respectively.

5. The BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device according to claim 4, wherein the second surface of the tip of each inner lead has a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead.

6. A BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device fabricated using a lead frame according to claim 1 or 2, comprising:

terminal portions made of solder and arranged on a

surface of the lead frame where the outer terminal portions are formed, the terminal portions serving to be connected to an external circuit;

the lead frame including a die pad having the same thickness as that of the inner lead tip and a size allowing the die pad to be received between facing ones of electrode portions of a semiconductor chip;

the semiconductor chip fixedly attached, at a surface thereof formed with the electrode portions, to the die pad by an adhesive in such a fashion that the surface formed with the electrode portions directs in the same direction as the second surfaces of the inner lead tips; and

the electrode portions each being electrically connected to the second surface of an associated one of the inner leads by a wire.

7. A BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device fabricated using a lead frame according to claim 1 or 2, comprising:

terminal portions made of solder and arranged on a surface of the lead frame where the outer terminal portions are formed, the terminal portions serving to be connected to an external circuit;

the lead frame including a die pad having the same thickness as that of the inner lead tip and a size allowing

the die pad to be received betwe n facing ones of electrode portions of a semiconductor chip;

the semiconductor chip fixedly attached, at a surface thereof opposite to a surface formed with the electrode portions, to the die pad by an adhesive in such a fashion that the electrode portions direct in the same direction as the second surfaces of the inner lead tips; and

the electrode portions each being electrically connected to the second surface of an associated one of the inner leads by a wire.

[DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION]

[FIELD OF THE INVENTION]

The present invention relates to a lead frame member for a surface-mounting type resin encapsulated semiconductor device in which a lead frame is used as a core to form a circuit, and more particularly to a method for fabricating a lead frame member for BGA type semiconductor devices.

[DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART]

Recently, semiconductor devices have been developed to have a higher integration degree and a higher performance in pace with the tendency of electronic appliances to have a high performance and a light, thin,

simple, and miniature structure. A representative example of such semiconductor devices is an ASIC of LSI. In such a highly integrated semiconductor device having a higher performance, a rapid signal processing is conducted. Due to such a rapid signal processing, the inductance generated in the package may exceed a negligible level. In order to reduce the inductance in the package, proposals of increasing the number of power source terminals and ground terminals or reducing a substantial inductance have been made. In accordance with such proposals, an increase in the integration degree and performance of a semiconductor device results in an increase in the total number of outer terminals (pins). For this reason, semiconductor devices should have a multipinned structure using a further increased number of pins. Among semiconductor devices such as ASICs, representative examples of which are multipinned ICs, in particular, gate arrays or standard cells, microcomputers, or DSPs (Digital Signal Processors), those using lead frames include surface-mounting packages such as QFPs (Quad Flat Packages). Currently, QFPs up to a 300-pin class are practically being used. Such a QFP uses a single-layered lead frame 1410 shown in Fig. 14b. The cross-sectional structure of this QFP is shown in Fig. 14a. As shown in Fig. 14a, a semiconductor chip 1420 is mounted on a die pad 1411. Terminals (electrode pads) 1421 of the

semiconductor chip 1420 are connected with tips 1412A of inner leads 1412 plated with, for example, gold, by means of wires 1430, respectively. Thereafter, a resin encapsulating process is conducted, thereby forming a resin encapsulate 1440. Dam bars are then partially cut. Finally, outer leads 1413 are bent to have a gull-wing shape. Thus, the fabrication of the QFP is completed. This QFP has a structure in which the outer leads adapted to be connected to an external circuit are simultaneously arranged at the four sides of the package. That is, such a QFP is one developed to cope with a requirement for an increase in the number of terminals (pins). In the above case, the single-layered lead frame 1410 used is typically fabricated by processing a metal plate, made of cobalt, 42 ALLOY (42% Ni/Fe alloy), or a copper-based alloy exhibiting a high conductivity and a high strength, in accordance with an etching process or a stamping process to have a shape shown in Fig. 14b. In Fig. 14b, the portion (イ) is a plan view of the single-layered lead frame, and the portion (ロ) is a cross sectional view taken along the line F1 - F2 of the portion (イ).

However, semiconductor devices recently developed to have a higher signal processing speed and a higher performance (function) have inevitably involved use of an increased number of terminals. In the case of QFPs, use of

an increased number of terminals may be achieved by reducing the pitch of outer terminals. However, where the pitch of outer terminals is reduced, the outer terminals should have a correspondingly reduced width. This results in a degradation in the strength of the outer terminals. As a result, there may be problems in regard to the positional accuracy or the accuracy of flatness in the terminal shaping process for processing the outer terminals to have a gull-wing shape. In QFPs, the pitch of the outer leads is further reduced from 0.4 mm to 0.3 mm. Due to such a reduced outer lead pitch, it is difficult to achieve the mounting process. This causes a problem in that a sophisticated board mounting technique should be realized.

In order to avoid problems involved in conventional QFPs in regard to the mounting efficiency and mounting possibility, a plastic package semiconductor device called a "BGA (Ball Grid Array) semiconductor package" has been developed which is a surface-mounting package having solder balls as outer terminals thereof. The BGA semiconductor package is a surface-mounting semiconductor device (plastic package) in which outer terminals thereof are comprised of solder balls arranged in a matrix array on a package surface. In order to increase the number of input/output terminals in such a BGA semiconductor package, a semiconductor chip is mounted on one surface of a double-

sided circuit board. To the other surface of the circuit board, spherical solder balls are attached as electrodes for outer terminals. The electrodes for outer terminals are electrically conducted with the semiconductor chip via through holes, respectively. Since the spherical solder balls are arranged in the form of an array, it is possible to increase the terminal pitch, as compared to semiconductor devices using a lead frame. Accordingly, it is possible to achieve an increase in the number of input/output terminals without any difficulty in mounting semiconductor devices. The above mentioned BGA semiconductor package typically has a structure as shown in Fig. 11a. Fig. 11b is a view taken toward the lower surface of a blank shown in Fig. 11a. Fig. 11c shows through holes 1150. This BGA semiconductor package includes a die pad 1105 and bonding pads 1110 provided at one surface of a flat blank (resin plate) 1102 made of, for example, BT resin (bismalleid-based resin) to exhibit an anti-heat dissipation property. The die pad 1105 is adapted to mount a semiconductor chip 1101 thereon. The bonding pads 1110 are electrically connected with the semiconductor chip 1101 by means of bonding wires 1108, respectively. The BGA semiconductor package also includes outer connecting terminals 1106 provided at the other surface of the blank 1102. The outer connecting terminals

1106 are comprised of solder balls arranged in the form of a lattice or in a zig-zag fashion to electrically and physically connect the resulting semiconductor device to an external circuit. The bonding pads 1110 are electrically connected to the outer connecting terminals 1106 by means of wires 1104, through holes 1150, and wires 1104A, respectively. However, such a BGA semiconductor package has a complex configuration in that the blank 1102 is formed at both surfaces thereof with the circuits adapted to connect the semiconductor chip mounted on the BGA semiconductor package with the wires and electrodes, as outer terminals, adapted to allow the semiconductor package to be mounted on a printed circuit board after being configured into a semiconductor device. Furthermore, a short circuit may occur in the through holes 1150 due to a thermal expansion of the resin. Thus, the above mentioned BGA semiconductor package involves various problems in regard to manufacture and reliance.

In order to simplify the fabrication process of semiconductor packages while avoiding a degradation in reliability, various proposals have recently been made in which a circuit having a lead frame as a core thereof is formed, as different from the structure shown in Figs. 11a to 11c. In BGA semiconductor packages using such a lead frame, holes are perforated at areas respectively

corresponding to the outer terminal portions 1214 of the lead frame 1210. The lead frame 1210 is fixedly attached to an insulating film 1260. Such a structure is illustrated in Fig. 12a. A similar structure is shown in Fig. 12b. Conventionally, the lead frame used in BGA semiconductor packages adapted to use such a lead frame is fabricated using an etching process as shown in Figs. 13a to 13e. Inner and outer terminal portions 1212 and 1214 are formed to have the same thickness as that of a lead frame blank used. The etching process illustrated in Figs. 13a to 13e will now be described in brief. First, a thin plate (a lead frame blank 1310) made of a copper alloy or a nickel-copper alloy containing 42% Ni to have a thickness of about 0.25 mm is sufficiently cleaned. Thereafter, a photoresist 1320 such as a water-soluble casein resist using potassium dichromate as a sensitive agent is uniformly coated over both surfaces of the thin plate (Fig. 13b).

Subsequently, the resist films are exposed to highly-pressurized mercury while using a mask formed with a desired pattern, and then developed using a desired developing solution, thereby forming resist patterns 1330 (Fig. 13c). If necessary, an additional process such as a film hardening process or a cleaning process is then conducted. An etching solution containing a ferric

chloride solution as a principal component thereof is sprayed onto the thin plate (lead frame blank 1310), thereby causing the thin plate to be etched to have through holes having a desired shape and size (Fig. 13d).

The remaining resist films are then removed (Fig. 13e). After the removal of the resist films, the resulting structure is cleaned to obtain a desired lead frame. Thus, the etching process is completed. The lead frame obtained after the etching process is then subjected to a silver plating process at desired regions thereof. Following processes such as a cleaning process and a drying process, the inner lead portions of the lead frame are subjected to a tapping process using a polyimide-based adhesive tape for their fixing. If necessary, a bending process for tab bars and a down-setting process for the die pad are conducted. In the etching process shown in Fig. 13a to 13e, however, the thin plate is etched in both the direction of the thickness and directions perpendicular to the direction of the thickness. For this reason, there is a limitation in the miniaturization of inner lead pitches of lead frames.

[SUBJECT MATTERS TO BE SOLVED BY THE INVENTION]

As described above, BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor devices using a lead frame as a core thereof can have an increased pitch of outer terminals adapted to

be connected to an external circuit while achieving an easy mounting for semiconductor devices, thereby allowing an increase in the number of input and output terminals, as compared to semiconductor packages using a single-layered lead frame shown in Fig. 14b while having outer terminals having the same structure as those of the BGA type semiconductor packages. However, there has also been growing demand for an increase in the number of terminals semiconductor packages. To this end, a reduced pitch of inner leads has been essentially required. Consequently, it is necessary to provide schemes capable of solving such a requirement. The present invention is adapted to solve the above mentioned requirement. In accordance with the present invention, it is possible to use an increased number of terminals. The present invention is adapted to provide a BGA type semiconductor device in which a circuit using a lead frame as its core is formed. Also, the present invention is adapted to provide a lead frame used to fabricate the above mentioned semiconductor device.

[MEANS FOR SOLVING THE SUBJECT MATTERS]

The lead frame of the present invention is shaped to have a thickness smaller than that of a lead frame blank at tips of inner leads thereof in accordance with a two-step etching process. This lead frame is characterized in that

it comprises: inner leads; outer terminal portions each integrally connected to an associated one of the inner leads, the outer terminal portions being adapted to be electrically connected to an external circuit and arranged in a two-dimensional fashion on a surface of the lead frame blank where the inner leads are formed; the tips of the inner leads each having a polygonal cross-sectional shape including four faces respectively provided with a first surface, a second surface, a third surface, and a fourth surface, the first surface being opposite to the second surface and flush with one surface of the remaining portion of the inner lead having the same thickness as that of the lead frame blank, and the third and fourth surfaces each having a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead; and the outer terminal portions each having a polygonal cross-sectional shape including four faces respectively provided with a pair of opposite surfaces being flush with respective surfaces of the lead frame blank and another pair of opposite surfaces having a convex shape protruded toward the outside of the outer terminal portion. The present invention is also characterized by a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device fabricated using the lead frame of the present invention comprising: terminal portions made of solder and arranged on a surface of the lead frame where the outer terminal

portions are formed, the terminal portions serving to be connected to an external circuit; a semiconductor chip fixedly attached, at a surface thereof formed with electrode portions, to the first surfaces of the inner leads by an insulating adhesive interposed therebetween in such a fashion that the electrode portions are received between facing ones of the inner leads; the electrode portions each being electrically connected to the second surface of an associated one of the inner leads by a wire. Also, the present invention is characterized by a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device fabricated using the lead frame of the present invention comprising: terminal portions made of solder and arranged on a surface of the lead frame where the outer terminal portions are formed, the terminal portions serving to be connected to an external circuit; and a semiconductor chip electrically connected to the second surfaces of the inner leads by bumps, respectively. This BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device is also characterized in that the second surface of the tip of each inner lead has a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead. The present invention is further characterized by a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device fabricated using the lead frame of the present invention comprising: terminal portions made of solder and arranged on a surface

of the lead frame where the outer terminal portions are formed, the terminal portions serving to be connected to an external circuit; the lead frame including a die pad having the same thickness as that of the inner lead tip and a size allowing the die pad to be received between facing ones of electrode portions of a semiconductor chip; the semiconductor chip fixedly attached, at a surface thereof formed with the electrode portions, to the die pad by an adhesive in such a fashion that the surface formed with the electrode portions directs in the same direction as the second surfaces of the inner lead tips; and the electrode portions each being electrically connected to the second surface of an associated one of the inner leads by a wire.

The present invention is also characterized by a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device fabricated using the lead frame of the present invention comprising: terminal portions made of solder and arranged on a surface of the lead frame where the outer terminal portions are formed, the terminal portions serving to be connected to an external circuit; the lead frame including a die pad having the same thickness as that of the inner lead tip and a size allowing the die pad to be received between facing ones of electrode portions of a semiconductor chip; the semiconductor chip fixedly attached, at a surface thereof opposite to a surface formed with the electrode portions,

to the die pad by an adhesive in such a fashion that the electrode portions direct in the same direction as the second surfaces of the inner lead tips; and the electrode portions each being electrically connected to the second surface of an associated one of the inner leads by a wire.

[FUNCTIONS]

The lead frame of the present invention is fabricated using a two-step etching process in such a fashion that it has a thickness smaller than that of a lead frame blank used at its inner lead tips. In particular, the present invention makes it possible to fabricate a lead frame having a thickness smaller than that of a lead frame blank at tips of inner leads thereof in accordance with a two-step etching process. That is, it is possible, in accordance with the present invention, to fabricate a lead frame having a thickness smaller than that of a lead frame blank at tips of inner leads thereof in accordance with an etching process shown in Figs. 8 or 9, thereby being capable of achieving a reduction in the pitch of inner leads. In accordance with the present invention, it is also possible to provide a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device capable of achieving use of an increased number of terminals by arranging outer terminal portions in a two-dimensional fashion on a lead frame

surface. The present invention also achieves a reduction in the pitch of the inner leads as well as a reduction in the tip width of the inner leads by allowing the inner leads to have a thickness smaller than that of the lead frame blank. The tip of each inner lead has a polygonal cross-sectional shape including four faces respectively provided with a first surface, a second surface, a third surface, and a fourth surface. The first surface is opposite to the second surface and flush with one surface of the remaining portion of the inner lead having the same thickness as that of the lead frame blank. The third and fourth surfaces have a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead. Accordingly, an increase in strength is obtained with respect to the wire bonding width of the inner lead tips. Each outer terminal portion has a polygonal cross-sectional shape including four faces respectively provided with a pair of opposite surfaces being flush with respective surfaces of the lead frame blank and another pair of opposite surfaces having a convex shape protruded toward the outside of the outer terminal portion. Accordingly, the outer terminal portions have a sufficient strength. By virtue of the lead frame of the present invention having the above mentioned structure, the BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device of the present invention can have an increased number of

terminals.

[EMBODIMENTS]

Hereinafter, embodiments of the present invention will be described in conjunction with the annexed drawings. First, a lead frame according to a first embodiment of the present invention will be described. Fig. 1a is a plan view schematically illustrating the lead frame according to the first embodiment of the present invention. Fig. 1b is an enlarged view corresponding to about 1/4 portion of Fig. 1a. Fig. 1c is a cross-sectional view illustrating tips of inner leads. Fig. 1d is a cross-sectional view partially taken along the line A1 - A2 of Fig. 1a.

For the easy understanding of the illustrated structure, Fig. 1a, which is a schematic view, illustrates a reduced number of inner leads and a reduced number of outer terminal portions, as compared to Fig. 1b. In the figures, the reference numeral 100 denotes a lead frame, 110 inner leads, 110A tips of the inner leads, 120 outer terminal portions, 140 dam bars, 150 tab bars, 160 a frame portion, and 170 die holes. The lead frame according to the first embodiment is made of a nickel-copper alloy containing 42% Ni. This lead frame is fabricated in accordance with an etching process shown in Fig. 8 so that it is used for BGA type semiconductor devices. As shown in

Fig. 1a, outer terminal portions 120, each of which is integrally connected to an associated one of inner leads 110, are arranged in a two-dimensional fashion on a surface where the inner leads are formed, that is, a lead frame surface. The inner leads 110 has a thickness smaller than that of a blank for the lead frame at its entire portion including tips 110A. The outer terminal portions 120 have the same thickness as that of the lead frame blank. The inner leads 110 have a thickness of 40 μm whereas the portions of the lead frame other than the inner leads 110 have a thickness of 0.15 mm corresponding to the thickness of the lead frame blank. The tips 110A of the inner leads have a small pitch of 0.12 mm so as to achieve an increase in the number of terminals for semiconductor devices. As shown in Fig. 1c, the tip 110A of each inner lead has a substantially polygonal cross-sectional shape having four faces. The first face denoted by the reference numeral 110Aa corresponds to a surface of the lead frame blank. That is, the first face 110Aa is flush with one surface of an associated one of the outer terminal portions 120 involving no reduction in thickness. The second face denoted by the reference numeral 110Ab is a surface etched, but having a substantially flat profile, so as to allow an easy wire boding thereon. The third and fourth faces 110Ac and 110Ad have a concave shape depressed toward the inside

of the associated inner lead, respectively. This structure exhibits a high strength even though the second face (wire bonding surface) 110Ab is narrow. Each outer terminal portion 120 has a substantially polygonal cross-sectional shape having four faces, as shown in Fig. 1d. A pair of opposite faces 120a and 120b have a convex shape protruded toward the outside of the associated outer terminal portion, respectively. As shown in Fig. 1d, each inner lead 110 has a cross-sectional shape corresponding to that of its tip 110A shown in Fig. 1c. In the case of the lead frame 100 according to this embodiment, the outer terminal portions 120 are integrally connected to dam bars 140.

Now, a lead frame according to a second embodiment of the present invention will be described. Fig. 2a is a plan view schematically illustrating the lead frame, denoted by the reference numeral 100a, according to the first embodiment of the present invention. Fig. 2b is an enlarged view corresponding to about 1/4 portion of Fig. 1a. Fig. 2c(1) is a cross-sectional view illustrating tips of inner leads. Fig. 2c(2) is a cross-sectional view partially taken along the line C1 - C2 of Fig. 2b, illustrating the cross sections of the inner leads. Fig. 2c(3) is a cross-sectional view partially taken along the line C1 - C2 of Fig. 2b, illustrating the cross sections of the outer terminal portions 120. For the easy

understanding of the illustrated structure, Fig. 2a, which is a schematic view, illustrates a reduced number of inner leads and a reduced number of outer terminal portions, as compared to Fig. 2b. Similarly to the first embodiment, the lead frame according to the second embodiment is made of a nickel-copper alloy containing 42% Ni. This lead frame is fabricated in accordance with an etching process shown in Fig. 8 so that it is used for BGA type semiconductor devices. As shown in Fig. 2a, outer terminal portions 120, each of which is integrally connected to an associated one of inner leads 110, are arranged in a two-dimensional fashion on a lead frame surface. As different from the first embodiment, the inner leads 110 of the second embodiment has a thickness smaller than that of a blank for the lead frame only at its tips 110A. As shown in Fig. 2c(イ), the tip 110A of each inner lead has a cross-sectional shape substantially same as that of the first embodiment. The entire portion of each inner lead, except for a portion corresponding to a bonding region where an electrode portion (pad) is wire-bonded to a semiconductor chip for the connection therebetween, has the same thickness as that of the lead frame blank, similarly to the outer terminal portions 120, as shown in Fig. 2c(ロ). For this reason, the above mentioned portion of each inner lead cannot have a small pitch as in the tip.

As shown in Fig. 2c(A), each outer terminal portion 120 has a cross section with the same thickness as that of the lead frame blank, as in the lead frame of the first embodiment. Also, in the case of the lead frame 100A according to this embodiment, the outer terminal portions 120 are integrally connected to dam bars 140.

Where either the lead frame of the first embodiment or the lead frame of the second embodiment may be easily twisted at its inner leads 110 when it is formed into the shape of Fig. 1 or 2 in accordance with an etching process. To this end, the lead frame is subjected to an etching process in a state in which the tips of the inner leads are fixed together by means of connecting portions 110B. After completion of the etching process, the inner leads 110 are fixedly held by reinforcing tapes 190 (Fig. 3b). When a semiconductor device is fabricated using the lead frame, those fixing members are removed using a press or the like (Fig. 2a). In the case of the lead frame according to the second embodiment, it can be subjected to the etching process under the condition in which the tip of each inner lead is directly connected to the die pad. In this case, unnecessary portions of the lead frame are cut off after the etching process.

A method for etching the lead frame of the first embodiment will now be described in conjunction with Figs.

8a to 8e. Figs. 8a to 8e are cross-sectional views respectively illustrating sequential steps of the etching process for the lead frame of the first embodiment shown in Fig. 1. In particular, the cross-sectional views of Figs. 8a to 8e correspond to a cross section taken along the line A1 - A2 of Fig. 1b, respectively. In Figs. 8a to 8e, the reference numeral 810 denotes a lead frame blank, 820A and 820B resist patterns, 830 first openings, 840 second openings, 850 first concave portions, 870 flat surfaces, and 880 an etch-resistant layer, respectively. Also, the reference numeral 110 denotes inner leads, and the reference numeral 120 denotes outer terminal portions. First, an water-soluble casein resist using potassium dichromate as a sensitive agent is coated over both surfaces of a lead frame blank 810 made of a nickel-copper alloy containing 42% Ni to have a thickness of about 0.15 mm. Using desired pattern plates, the resist films are patterned to form resist patterns 820A and 820B having first openings 830 and second openings 840, respectively (Fig. 8a).

The first openings 830 are adapted to not only form a desired shape for outer terminal portions in a subsequent process, but also to allow the lead frame blank 810 to be etched in accordance with the pattern shape of the first openings to have a reduced thickness at inner lead forming

regions. The second openings 840 are adapted to form desired shapes of inner leads and outer terminal portions. Thereafter, both surfaces of the lead frame blank 810 formed with the resist patterns are etched using a 45 Be ferric chloride solution of 57°C at a spray pressure of 2.5 kg/cm^2. The etching process is terminated at the point of time when first recesses 850 etched to have a flat etched bottom surface have a depth h corresponding to 1/3 of the thickness of the lead frame blank (Fig. 8b).

Although both surfaces of the lead frame blank 810 are simultaneously etched in the primary etching process, it is unnecessary to simultaneously both surface of the lead frame blank 810. For instance, an etching process may be conducted at the surface of the lead frame blank formed with the resist pattern 820B having openings of a desired shape to form at least a desired shape of the inner leads using an etchant solution. In this case, the etching process is terminated after obtaining a desired etching depth at the etched inner lead forming regions. The reason why both surfaces of the lead frame blank 810 are simultaneously etched, as in this embodiment, is to reduce the etching time taken in a secondary etching process as described hereinafter. The total time taken for the primary and secondary etching processes is less than that taken in the case of etching only one surface of the lead

frame blank on which the resist pattern 820B is formed. Subsequently, the surface provided with the first recesses 850 respectively etched at the first openings 830 is entirely coated with an etch-resistant hot-melt wax (acidic wax type MR-WB6, The Inctec Inc.) by a die coater to form an etch-resistant layer 880 so as to fill up the first recesses 850 and to cover the resist pattern 820A (Fig. 8c).

It is unnecessary to coat the etch-resistant layer 880 over the entire portion of the surface provided with the resist pattern 820A. However, it is preferred that the etch-resistant layer 880 be coated over the entire portion of the surface formed with the first recesses 850 and first openings 830, as shown in Fig. 8c, because it is difficult to coat the etch-resistant layer 880 only on the surface portion including the first recesses 850. Although the hot-melt wax employed in this embodiment is an alkali-soluble wax, any suitable wax resistant to the etching action of the etchant solution and remaining somewhat soft during etching may be used. A wax for forming the etch-resistant layer 880 is not limited to the aforementioned wax, but may be a wax of a UV-setting type. Since each first recess 850 etched by the primary etching process at the surface formed with the pattern adapted to form a desired shape of the inner lead tip is filled up

with the etch-resistant layer 880, it is not further etched in the following secondary etching process. The etch-resistant layer 880 also enhances the mechanical strength of the lead frame blank for the second etching process, thereby enabling the second etching process to be conducted while keeping a high accuracy. It is also possible to enable a second etchant solution to be sprayed at an increased spraying pressure, for example, 2.5 kg/cm or above, in the secondary etching process. The increased spraying pressure promotes the progress of etching in the direction of the thickness of the lead frame blank in the secondary etching process. Then, the lead frame blank is subjected to a secondary etching process. In this secondary etching process, the lead frame blank 810 is etched at its surface formed with second recesses 860 to completely perforate the second recesses 860, thereby forming inner leads 110 and outer terminal portions 120 (Fig. 8d).

The bottom surface 870 of each recess formed by the primary etching process is flat. However, both side surfaces of each recess positioned at opposite sides of the bottom surface 870 have a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead. Then, the lead frame blank is cleaned. After completion of the cleaning process, the etch-resistant layer 880, resist films (resist patterns

820A and 820B) are sequentially removed. Thus, a lead frame having a structure of Fig. 1a formed with the inner leads 110 and outer terminal portions 120 is obtained. The removal of the etch-resistant layer 880 and resist films (resist patterns 820A and 820B) is achieved using a sodium hydroxide solution serving to dissolve them.

Although the lead frame etching method of Figs. 8a to 8e correspond to a cross section taken along the line A1 - A2 of Fig. 1b, respectively, the inner lead tips 110A of Fig. 1a may be formed to have the same shape as that of the inner leads 110 shown in Fig. 8. Since the entire portion of each inner lead is formed to have a thickness smaller than that of the lead frame blank in accordance with the etching process shown in Fig. 8, it is possible to obtain a reduced pitch of the inner lead tips. It is also possible to allow the inner leads to have a reduced pitch at their portions other than their tips. In particular, it is possible to provide a structure in which the first surface 110Aa of the inner lead tip can be flush with the lead frame blank portions having the same thickness as that of the lead frame blank, except for the lead frame blank portions having a reduced thickness, while being opposite to the second surface 110Ab, as shown in Fig. 1c. In this case, the third and fourth surfaces 110Ac and 110Ad may have a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the

inner lead.

The lead frame of the second embodiment shown in Figs. 2a to 2e can be fabricated using an etching method partially modified from that of Figs. 8a to 8e. That is, the tip 110A of each inner lead is formed to have a thickness smaller than that of the lead frame blank 810 using the same method as that shown in Figs. 8a to 8e and used for the fabrication of the inner leads 110. The remaining portions of the lead frame except for the inner lead tips are formed to have the same thickness as that of the lead frame blank 810 using the same process as used in the formation of the outer terminal portions 120 shown in Figs. 8a to 8e. Thus, the lead frame of the second embodiment, in which only the inner lead tips have a thickness smaller than that of the lead frame blank, can be fabricated using an etching process.

Where a semiconductor chip is mounted on the second surfaces 110b of the inner leads by means of bumps for an electrical connection therebetween, as in a semiconductor device according to a second embodiment as described hereinafter, an increased tolerance for the connection by bumps is obtained when the second surface 110b has a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead. To this end, an etching method shown in Figs. 9a to 9e is used in this case. The etching method shown in Figs.

9a to 9e is the same as that of Figs. 8a to 8e in association with its primary etching process. After completion of the primary etching process, the etching method is conducted in a manner different from that of the etching method of Figs. 8a to 8e in that the second etching process is conduced at the side of the first recesses 850 after filling up the second recesses 860 by the etch-resist layer 880, thereby completely perforating the second recesses 860. The cross section of each inner lead, including its tip, formed in accordance with the etching method of Figs. 9a to 9e, has a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead at the second surface 110b, as shown in Fig. 5.

The etching method in which the etching process is conducted at two separate steps, respectively, as in that of Figs. 8a to 8e or 9a to 9e, is generally called a "two-step etching method". This etching method is advantageous in that a desired fineness can be obtained. The etching method used to fabricate the lead frame 110 of the first embodiment shown in Figs. 1a to 1d or the lead frame of the second embodiment shown in Figs. 2a to 2c involves the two-step etching method and the method for forming a desired shape of each lead frame portion while reducing the thickness of each pattern formed. In particular, the etching method makes it possible to achieve a desired

fineness. In accordance with the method illustrated in Figs. 8a to 8e or Figs. 9a to 9e, the fineness of the tip of each inner lead formed by this method is dependent on the thickness of the inner lead tip. For example, where the blank has a thickness t reduced to 50 Om, the inner leads can have a fineness corresponding to a lead width W1 of 100 Om and a tip pitch p of 0.15 mm, as shown in Fig. 8e. In the case of using a small blank thickness t of about 30 Om and a lead width W1 of 70 Om, it is possible to form inner leads having a fineness corresponding to an inner lead pitch p of 0.12 mm. Of course, it may be possible to form inner leads having a further reduced tip pitch by adjusting the blank thickness t and the lead width W1.

Now, preferred embodiments of the present invention associated with a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device will be described in conjunction with the annexed drawings. First, a first embodiment of a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device will be described. Fig. 4a is a cross-sectional view illustrating the BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device according to the first embodiment. Figs. 4b and 4c are cross-sectional views taken in the direction of the thickness of the semiconductor device to illustrate one inner lead tip and one outer lead portion, respectively. In Figs. 4a to 4c, the reference numeral 200 denotes the semiconductor device, 211 electrode portions (pads), 220 wires, 240 a resin encapsulate, 250 reinforcing tapes, 260 an insulating adhesive, and 270 terminal portions, respectively. The BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device is fabricated using the lead frame according to the first embodiment. In this BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device, terminal portions 270, which are made of solder and adapted to connected to an external circuit, are arranged in a two-dimensional fashion on respective surfaces of outer

terminal portions 120 included in the lead frame. In this first embodiment, a semiconductor chip 210 is fixedly attached to the first surfaces 110a of inner leads 110 by means of an insulating adhesive 260 at its surface formed with electrode portions (pads) 211 in such a fashion that the electrode portions (pads) 211 are interposed between facing ones of the inner leads 110. Each electrode portion (pad) 211 is electrically connected to the second surface 110b of an associated one of the inner leads 110 by means of a wire 220. The semiconductor device of this first embodiment is encapsulated by a resin encapsulate 240 having a size substantially same as that of the semiconductor chip. This semiconductor device is also called a "CSP (Chip Size Package)". Since the tip of each inner lead 110 connected with the semiconductor chip by the associated wire 220 has a thickness smaller than that of the lead frame blank, the semiconductor device can have a thin structure.

The inner leads 110 of the lead frame used in the semiconductor device of this first embodiment has a cross-sectional shape as shown in Fig. 10(イ)a. The inner lead 110 has an etched flat surface (second surface) 110Ab which has a width W1 slightly more than the width W2 of an opposite surface 110Aa (first surface). The widths W1 and W2 are more than the width W at the central portion of the inner lead when viewed in the direction of the inner lead thickness. Thus, the tip of the inner lead has a cross-sectional shape having opposite wide surfaces while having a third surface 110Ac and a fourth surface 110Ad with a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead. By virtue of such a structure, a stable connection and an easy bonding are achieved in either case in which the inner lead tip 110A is wire-bonded to the semiconductor chip (not shown) at its first surface 110Aa or its second surface 110Ab. In the illustrated case, however, the etched surface (Fig. 10(イ)a) is used as a bonding surface. In the figure, the reference numeral 110Ab denotes the flat surface (second surface) formed by an etching process, 110Aa the surface of the lead frame blank (first surface), 1020A wires, and 1021a plated portions, respectively. Since the etched flat surface 110aB (second surface) is not rough, it exhibits a superior aptitude for connection (bonding) in the case of Fig. 10(ロ)a. Fig. 10(ハ) illustrates the connection (bonding) of the inner lead tip 1010B of the lead frame fabricated in accordance with an etching method shown in Fig. 13 to a semiconductor chip (not shown). In this case, the inner lead tip 1010B is

flat at both surfaces thereof. However, the surfaces of the inner lead tip 1010B have a width not more than the width defined between them in the thickness direction. Since both the surfaces are portions of the unprocessed surfaces of the blank for forming this lead frame, the aptitude thereof for connection (bonding) is inferior to that of the etched flat surface of the inner lead tip in accordance with this embodiment. Fig. 10(C) illustrates the tips 1010C and 1010D of inner leads formed in accordance with an etching process after being processed to have a reduced thickness and then subjected to an etching process and then connected to a semiconductor chip (not shown). Since the surface of each inner lead tip, at which a pressing process is conducted, is not flat, as shown in the figure, the tip is unstable during a connection (bonding) process, which may cause a problem in the reliability of the semiconductor package, as shown in Figs. 10(C)a and 10(C)b. In the figures, the reference numeral 1010Ab denotes a coining surface, and the reference numeral 1010Aa denotes a lead frame blank surface.

A second embodiment of the present invention associated with a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device will now be described. Fig. 5a is a cross-sectional view illustrating the BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device according to the second embodiment. Figs. 5b and 5c are cross-sectional views taken in the direction of the thickness of the semiconductor device to illustrate one inner lead tip and one outer lead portion, respectively. In Figs. 5a to 5c, the reference numeral 200 denotes the semiconductor device, 210 a semiconductor chip, 212 bumps, 240 a resin encapsulate, 250 reinforcing tapes, and 270 terminal portions, respectively. The BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device is fabricated using a lead frame made of a nickel-copper alloy containing 42% Ni to have a thickness of about 0.15 mm and processed to have the same shape as that in the first embodiment of Figs. 1a and 1b in accordance with an etching process of Figs. 9a to 9e while having, at the entire portion of each inner lead, a thickness smaller than that of a blank for the lead frame. In this BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device, terminal portions 270, which are made of solder and adapted to connected to an external circuit, are arranged in a two-dimensional fashion on one surface of the semiconductor device. In this second embodiment, a semiconductor chip 210 is mounted near the tips of the inner leads 110 by means of bumps 212. Where the strength of the inner leads is insufficient due to a thin structure of the lead frame, the semiconductor chip 210 may be

attached to the lead frame over the entire portion of the lead frame.

The inner leads 110 of the lead frame used in the semiconductor device of this second embodiment has a cross-sectional shape as shown in Fig. 10(1)b. The inner lead 110 has an etched flat surface (second surface) 110Ab which has a width W1A slightly more than the width W2A of an opposite surface. The widths W1A and W2A (about 100 Om) are more than the width WA at the central portion of the inner lead when viewed in the direction of the inner lead thickness. Thus, the tip of the inner lead has a cross-sectional shape having opposite wide surfaces. The first surface 110Aa is flat whereas the second surface 110Ab has a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead. The third and fourth surfaces 110Ac and 110Ad also have a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead. By virtue of such a structure, a stable and easy connection at the second surface 110Ab is achieved.

The semiconductor device according to this second embodiment uses the lead frame fabricated in accordance with the etching method of Figs. 9a to 9e while having a thickness smaller than that of the lead frame blank at the entire portion of the inner lead thereof. The lead frame also has a concave shape depressed toward the inside of the inner lead tip at the second surface 110b of the inner lead 110 including the tip. By virtue of such a lead frame structure, an increased tolerance for the connection by bumps is obtained.

A third embodiment of the present invention associated with a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device will now be described. Fig. 6a is a cross-sectional view illustrating the BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device according to the third embodiment. Figs. 6b and 6c are cross-sectional views taken in the direction of the thickness of the semiconductor device to illustrate one inner lead tip and one outer lead portion, respectively. In Figs. 6a to 6c, the reference numeral 200 denotes the semiconductor device, 210 a semiconductor chip,

211 wires, 220 a conductive adhesive, 270 terminal portions, 280 a protective frame portion, and 290 an adhesive, respectively. The BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device is fabricated using a lead frame having a die pad along with the lead frame structure of the first embodiment. In this BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device, terminal portions 270, which are made of solder and adapted to connected to an external circuit, are arranged in a two-dimensional fashion on one surface of the semiconductor device. The lead frame used in this second embodiment is fabricated using the etching method of Figs. 8a to 8e according to the first embodiment to have a thickness smaller than that of the lead frame blank at the entire portion of the inner lead and the die pad 130. This lead frame is the same as that of the first embodiment in terms of the used blank and shape, except for the die pad 130 and portions associated with the die pad 130. In the semiconductor device of this third embodiment, the die pad 130 has a size allowing it to be received between facing electrode portions (pads) 211 of the semiconductor chip 210. The semiconductor chip 210 is mounted on the die pad 130 in such a fashion that its surface provided with the electrode portions (bumps) 211 directs in the same direction as the second surface 110b of each inner lead 110 under the condition in which the surface provided with the

electrode portions 211 is attached to the die pad 130 by means of a conductive adhesive 260. The electrode portions (bumps) 211 are electrically connected to the second surfaces 110b of the inner leads 110 by means of wires, respectively. By virtue of such a structure, the semiconductor device of this embodiment can have a further thinned structure, as compared to that of the first embodiment or fourth embodiment. The reason why the conductive adhesive is used in this embodiment is to dissipate heat generated in the semiconductor device through the die pad. Where terminal portions are provided at the lower surface of the die pad for a connection to a ground line, it is possible to more effectively dissipate heat. A protective frame portion 280 is mounted by means of an adhesive 290 to cover the peripheral portion of the semiconductor device. This protective frame portion 280 is used where the semiconductor device has an insufficient strength due to its thinned structure. Accordingly, the protective frame portion 280 is not an essential element. In this embodiment, the die pad and semiconductor chip are connected together by means of the conductive adhesive, as mentioned above. Accordingly, where the die pad is connected to a ground line, it is possible to not only obtain a heat dissipation effect, but also to solve a problem associated with noise.

A fourth embodiment of the present invention associated with a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device will now be described. Fig. 7a is a cross-sectional view illustrating the BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device according to the fourth embodiment. Figs. 7b and 7c are cross-sectional views taken in the direction of the thickness of the semiconductor device to illustrate one inner lead tip and one outer lead portion, respectively. In Figs. 7a to 7c, the reference numeral 200 denotes the semiconductor device, 210 a semiconductor chip, 211 pads, 220 wieres, 240 a resin encapsulate, 250 reinforcing tapes, 260 a conductive adhesive, and 270 terminal portions, respectively. The semiconductor device of the fourth embodiment is a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device fabricated using a lead frame made of a nickel-copper alloy containing 42% Ni and processed to have the same shape as that in the third embodiment in accordance with an etching process of Figs. 8a to 8e while having, at the entire portion of each inner lead and its die pad 130, a thickness smaller than that of a blank for the lead frame. In this BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device, terminal portions 270, which are made of solder and adapted to connected to an external circuit, are arranged in a two-dimensional fashion on one surface of the semiconductor device. The die pad 130 has a size

larger than that of the third embodiment, but substantially equal to that of the semiconductor chip 210. The semiconductor chip 210 is mounted on the die pad 130 in such a fashion that its surface provided with the electrode portions (bumps) 211 directs in the same direction as the second surface 110b of each inner lead 110 under the condition in which a surface opposite to the surface provided with the electrode portions 211 is attached to the die pad 130 by means of a conductive adhesive 260. The electrode portions (bumps) 211 are electrically connected to the second surfaces 110b of the inner leads 110 by means of wires, respectively.

All the semiconductor devices of the first through fourth embodiments use a two-step etching method shown in Figs. 8 or 9 and have a thickness smaller than that of a lead frame blank used at at least its inner lead tip. Accordingly, these semiconductor devices achieves a further increase in the number of terminals, as compared to conventional BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor devices using a lead frame as a core, as in Fig. 12. Since the tips of the inner leads have a thickness smaller than that of the lead frame blank, it is possible to fabricate a semiconductor device having a thinned structure.

[EFFECTS OF THE INVENTION]

As apparent from the above description, the lead frame of the present invention is fabricated using a two-step etching process in such a fashion that it has a thickness smaller than that of a lead frame blank used at its inner lead tips. The present invention makes it possible to provide a BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device capable of achieving use of an increased number of terminals by arranging outer terminal portions in a two-dimensional fashion on a lead frame surface, as compared to conventional BGA semiconductor devices using a lead frame processed in such a fashion that it has the same thickness as that of the lead frame blank at the tips of inner leads thereof, as shown in Fig. 12. The BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device of the present invention is fabricated using the above mentioned lead frame of the present invention. Accordingly, the BGA type resin encapsulated semiconductor device can have a thinned structure while having an increased number of terminals. Thus, the present invention provides a BGA type semiconductor device using a lead frame.